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The Washington Merry-Go-Round

# Drug Peddlers Ignore Nixon Threat

By Jack Anderson

At a recent narcotics conference, President Nixon declared dramatically that keeping narcotics out of the country is "just as important as keeping armed enemy forces from landing in the U.S." The President then announced sternly that he would cut off aid to countries whose leaders "protect the activities of those who contribute to our drug problem."

Predictably, these bold words drew election-year headlines for the President and warm approval from a public alarmed over the drug danger. Yet classified documents in our possession show that the President has refused to cut off aid, despite evidence that certain foreign leaders are protecting the drug smugglers.

The smuggling operations in Laos, for example, illustrate the difference between what Mr. Nixon says in public and what his intelligence documents show in secret. To prop up the Souvanna Phouma government, he has poured in more than \$200 million in military aid annually. Yet his reports from the CIA and other agencies give him every reason to cut off this aid.

Says one document: "A broad spectrum of Lao society is involved in the narcotics business, including generals, princes, high-level bureaucrats and province governors."

The CIA specifically advised that Laotian generals are providing the transportation for

drug smugglers. Incredibly as it sounds, the planes and trucks used to carry the U.S.-bound narcotics are provided by the U.S. military programs which Mr. Nixon has sworn to cut off.

The secret documents make clear that the President is putting his military policies in Asia ahead of the drug invasion. "The difficulties of undertaking such drastic action (as aid cutoffs) cannot be over-emphasized," declares another document on Laos, "since . . . the risk of jeopardizing some part of the military effort is high."

In Cambodia, President Nixon also continues to bolster an unstable dictatorship with \$240 million worth of U.S. aid a year. Yet Cambodia is an important transshipment point for dope. An intelligence document explains why Mr. Nixon, however, has no intention in Cambodia of carrying out his threat to cut off aid:

"If U.S. aid were withdrawn, the government's ability to withstand Communist aggression would be weakened to the point of collapse."

## Saigon Smugglers

In South Vietnam, as well, the documents attest to "the corruption among government civilian, military and police officials, some of whom have been actively participating in the narcotics traffic themselves . . ." But again there is no real thought of cutting off aid.

The secret documents bluntly give the reason: "It is

not in U.S. interests to impose an aid cutoff, even to punish Vietnam for failure to control drugs . . ."

President Nixon's double talk on drugs is nowhere more apparent than in Thailand which gets over \$100 million in U.S. aid a year.

"We believe that major punitive measures (such as) withdrawal of aid, denial of Most Favored Nation status, etc. . . would probably undermine our cooperative relations with Thailand and jeopardize ongoing security activities . . ." says a U.S. intelligence document.

The President's threats could also be carried out in Iran, which the CIA fears may soon become a major supplier for U.S. drug traffickers. But the CIA reports:

"The Shah has spoken out on a few occasions . . . against addiction (and) rumors persist that some members of the royal family and parliament are narcotics users. Swiss authorities recently charged an Iranian Prince who accompanied the Shah to Switzerland with having transferred pure opium to Geneva."

Throughout Latin America, the same look-the-other-way policy prevails.

President Nixon, for instance, praised Paraguay for extraditing a notorious French narcotics smuggler, Auguste Ricard, to face trial in the U.S. What Mr. Nixon neglected to mention was that Ricard was relinquished only after we wrote a series of columns about Paraguay's government-

backed drug smuggling and after Democratic congressmen began talking of cutting off aid to Paraguay themselves.

If the President really wants to do something about Paraguay, he has CIA reports that two Paraguayan generals and the chief of its secret police are abetting the drug traffic. However, insiders say there is no real move to end the \$12-million-a-year aid to Paraguay.

In Panama, which gets \$18 million annually in aid, the President has intelligence reports saying: "One of the more glaring examples of official corruption in the country of Panama . . . General Omar Torrijos and President Lakas appear to be controlling factors in the narcotics traffic."

All over Latin America, the intelligence documents say, "the greatest detriment to effective enforcement is corruption. The corruption goes all the way to the top of some Latin American governments."

But in Latin America, too, President Nixon's vows to cut off aid to offending lands have been ignored. The documents say explicitly: "Coercive measures, such as reduction or termination of AID programs . . . generally have proven to be ineffective."

Footnote: The stack of documents in our hands also tells similar tales of rampant drug activity with various kinds of government collusion or inaction in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Mexico, Lebanon, India, Peru, Bolivia, Hong Kong and Syria.

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SAGA blows the lid off the South American narcotics pipeline—naming the politicians, and diplomats in Mexico, Venezuela, Peru, Panama, and Bolivia who “white gold” death racket—that is drug traffickers in the Western Hemisphere.

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**The Washington Merry-Go-Round**

# Paraguay Drug Traffickers Named

**By Jack Anderson**

In the impoverished little land of Paraguay, there is an old saying about dictator Alfredo Stroessner that "never a bird falls without his knowing about it."

This reputed omnisciencee has kept the burly El Presidente in full control of Paraguay for 18 years while his opponents have died mysteriously or fled into exile.

Thus, the American embassy in Asuncion was astonished when Stroessner, of all people, confessed to our Ambassador Raymond Ylitalo that he would like more information about the narcotics traffic in Paraguay. Stroessner claimed he wanted to stamp it out.

The efficient Ylitalo forwarded the request to the State Department, and the Central Intelligence Agency obligingly included it in a detailed, secret summary of drug operations in Paraguay.

The memo declared that Stroessner was up to his jack-boots in smuggling, though there was no proof he dealt in drugs. His tight little dictatorship, however, was described as "the Heroin Crossroads of South America," with much of the dope going to the U.S.

We published the secret details on April 22. The dictator promptly sent word to us through his Ambassador to Washington, Dr. Roque Avila, that he was surprised at the allegations and asked for the

names of those behind Paraguay's drug trade.

We have now supplied Avila with the names. The CIA memo, for instance, mentioned a "secret police" official who reportedly was "heavily involved in the (drug) traffic." The CIA didn't name him, but we told Avila the suspect is none other than Stroessner's trusted chief of investigation, police, Pastor Coronel.

**Generals Envolved**

The CIA also alleged—again without names—that "two... important generals" were deep in narcotics.

We identified one as Gen. Andres Rodriguez, the sternly handsome commander of 3,000 American-equipped troops based near Asuncion. His troops stand guard over contraband warehouses, and he controls aircraft for smuggling.

The other is Gen. Patricio Colman, a light infantry commander, whose troops put down an armed liberation movement in 1960, slicing off tongues, ears, heads and other parts of prisoners. Colman thereafter gained a smuggling franchise, considerable wealth and control of cross-country buslines.

We have also uncovered the identities of other high Paraguayan figures, who are directly controlled by Stroessner and are responsible for the drug trade. These men, ally approves every official

whose names we have also given Avila, include:

- Sabino Augusto Montanaro, grey-haired interior secretary, and his right-hand man, National Police Chief Gen. Francisco Britez. No large-scale dope trade in landlocked Paraguay would be possible without their acquiescence.

- Gen. Leodegar Cabello, the spiffily-uniformed defense minister, who is aware of the narcotics dealings of Gens. Rodriguez and Colman and is suspected of sharing their loot.

- Gen. German Martinez, a pale, garrulous artillery commander who controls contraband in and around Paraguari. With his smuggling proceeds, he has purchased model farms and raises thoroughbred cattle.

- Vice Adm. Hugo Gonzalez, chief of Paraguay's river gunboat navy, who earned his exalted rank by babysitting Stroessner's children. His gunboats protect the dope trade along the Paraguay and Parana rivers separating Paraguay from Brazil and Argentina.

- Air Force chief Gen. Vicente Quinonez, who supervises Asuncion airport and dozens of smaller fields. These are also used for drug shipments.

- Raul Sapena Pastor, the secretary of state, who personally approves every official

and diplomatic passport. He has granted passports to known smugglers. Even diplomatic pouches are used for smuggled goods.

These are some of the names my associate, Les Whitten, provided Ambassador Avila during an hour-long meeting with him at the modest Paraguayan Embassy. The envoy insisted he knew nothing about their alleged dope activities.

**Footnote:** On March 20, President Nixon called narcotics America's "number one domestic problem." Three days later, the U.S. gave 12 helicopters to Paraguay. U.S. military aid to the "Heroin Crossroads of South America" runs around \$2 million a year.

**Connally's Mission**

Sources close to Treasury Secretary John Connally say his secret mission after leaving the cabinet will be to rally the Lyndon Johnson wing of the Democratic Party into the Nixon camp in November.

Richard Nixon and John Connally have developed a close personal bond. Both are backroom operators and political infighters. They practice the same pragmatic politics.

During their political bull sessions, Mr. Nixon and Connally foresaw the increasing possibility that George McGovern could win the Democratic presidential nomination.

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